

TWENTY-SIXTH

Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS COMMITTEE,

OF THE

LOUTH

Rural District Council

FOR THE YEAR 1898,

BY

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LOUTH RURAL SANITARY DISTRICT,

TWENTY-SIXTH

ANNUAL MEDICAL REPORT.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Louth
Rural Sanitary Committee.*

GENTLEMEN,

The death rate per thousand has been 14·1,—a trifle less than the average of the previous 10 years. Infectious diseases have not been so prevalent as in some years, but the deaths from Zymotic disease, have been 24, against 21 last year. The reason is, there were 11 cases of Diarrhœa, instead of only one last year, (9 being of children under 5). But for this, the deaths from Zymotic disease would have been 14, against 21 last year. The rainfall was below the average, in January, February and March, also in June, July, August, September and October, especially in July, when it was 2·09 inch, and in September, when it was 2·61 inch, below the average—extremes in the weather, are always prejudicial to health,—and 8 of the deaths occurred in September and October. There have been no cases of Small-Pox, but Parliament has so altered the Vaccination Laws, that I look for considerable danger from this disease in the future. The use of Glycerinated Calf Lymph in Vaccination, with anti-septic precautions, almost removes all objection to the operation. The Government has appointed a Royal Commission, to enquire into the best method to dispose of sewage, and experiments prove, it is possible to purify it, by bacterial methods, and that these methods are not only much cheaper, but also more effectual.

WATER SUPPLY.—Much attention has been given to this subject during the year. 77 samples of drinking water have been analysed, 8 of which proved bad, 11 were impure in a minor degree, and 58 were good. Steps were taken by your authority, to remedy defects, and to see that a supply of pure water, was made conveniently available in every case. A few new wells have been sunk.

HOUSE ACCOMMODATION.—No houses have been condemned during the year, and there have been no cases of overcrowding, but where defects have been found, steps have been taken to remedy them. The Inspector has been diligent in this matter, and has served 206 notices for the abatement of nuisances, etc. At Legbourne, T. Cheney Garfit, Esq., has made great improvements, by pulling down old houses, and building good new ones; other persons also have built good houses in this village during the year. New houses have been built at North Cotes, for Mr. Campion, (Diphtheria having proved disastrous there at the beginning of the year) and also at Tetney Lock farm, for Mr. Holden, whose family had the same disease in the summer. In inspecting the district, I have found defects in ventilation, in two of the National Schools, these have either been, or are in the course of being, remedied. An epidemic of Contagious Ophthalmia, occurred amongst the children attending Tathwell School; proper measures were taken to prevent its spread, and it soon died out. Sore throat, with Ophthalmia, appeared in four houses at Orgath Hill, caused by insanitary defects, which being attended to, the epidemic disappeared. Epidemics of other minor infectious diseases have also had my attention. There were 49 notifications of infectious disease during the year, as follows:—

Scarlatina or Scarlet Fever	...	19
Diphtheria	...	17
Membranous Croup	...	1
Erysipelas	...	1
Puerperal Fever	...	1
Typhoid Fever	...	10
		—
Total	...	49
		—

The deaths from Zymotic disease were 24, viz:—

Diphtheria	...	...	4
Puerperal Fever	...	...	1
Measles	...	...	1
Whooping Cough	...	...	5
Diarrhœa	...	...	11
Typhoid Fever	...	...	2
			—
Total			24
			—

Being in the ratio of 1·1 per thousand.

SCARLATINA OR SCARLET FEVER:—There were 19 notifications, 16 of which were in Holton-le-Clay. It commenced there the beginning of February, where five cases occurred in two houses, near one another. There was a solitary case in March, and the girl, before being disinfected unfortunately played with two other children, living in another part of the village; the result was, that in May, there were six fresh cases in four houses. Finding the disease had spread in this way, you had warning notices printed, for distribution in the future. No fresh cases occurred until the end of September, when the disease was imported from Manchester, into a house near the Station, where four cases occurred, but the precautions taken checked its spread. Solitary cases occurred at Saltfleet in October, at South Thoresby in November, and at Kelstern in December. But I have reason to suspect, that several cases occurred in Kelstern, of such a mild type as to be unrecognized.

DIPHTHERIA.—There have been 17 cases, with four deaths. In March, two mild cases were notified at Mrs. Paul Smith's, at Fotherby, where an outbreak occurred the previous October.

A delicate woman who charred for Mrs. B. Campion, at North Cotes, died of the disease in January. Since then, a new, and more sanitary house has been built for Mr. Campion, and no fresh cases have occurred. An outbreak of five cases occurred at Tetney Lock Farm, in the parish of North Cotes, at Mr. Holden's, close to where the disease appeared last year; all recovered, except a young woman in delicate health, who visited there, and died at North Thoresby. A very careful examination of the premises, by myself, and the Inspector,

also of the domestic animals, including the cows, (which have been known to give the disease, through their milk, when suffering from a contagious eruptive disease of the udder, called Garget), failed to reveal the cause. Respecting this case, and that of Mrs. Paul Smith's, I think it well to point out, that Dr. Louis Parkes, in his work on Hygiene, says, "that recent research seems to show, that the Diphtheria contagion, has the power, under certain conditions, of lying latent for long periods of time, with the capacity of renewing its virulence under special circumstances." Dr. Klein, too, in his work on "Micro-organisms and Disease," says, "it is known that a room in which a Diphtheria case has once existed may for years harbour the contagium of Diphtheria, so that any new comer or inhabitant may contract the disease; moreover, it is known that in a locality in which Diphtheria has once been rife the disease may at any time reappear." Seven cases occurred in North Cockerington, three in one house, two died. It is gratifying to know, that the Antitoxin of Diphtheria, when used *early*, is very successful in curing the disease.

PUERPERAL FEVER.—There was one case at Maltby, which proved fatal.

ERYSIPELAS.—There is a case at Tetney, which is recovering, the drainage was found in good order.

MEASLES.—There was only one death from this disease, it was in the Tetney district.

WHOOPING COUGH.—Caused five deaths, three of which were in the Withern district. It was found necessary to close the school at Strubby, for two months, because of the prevalence of the disease.

TYPHOID FEVER.—This disease appeared in the autumn, in three of the districts, there were 10 notifications, and two deaths, one of the fatal cases had another serious disease when attacked. Four of the cases were at South Reston. Three occurred in one house at Alvingham, caused by polluted drinking water; steps were taken by your authority to remedy this. One case each occurred at Marshchapel, Withern, and Fulstow. In the latter case, the drainage was

found bad, and remedied by your direction. Pulmonary diseases caused 48 deaths, of which 18 were due to Phthisis. Heart disease accounted for 27, and Cancer for 15 deaths. There were only six violent deaths, as against 14 last year, there were 17 inquests.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The births were 482, in the ratio of 23·3 per thousand.

The deaths were 293, in the ratio of 14·1 per thousand. Seventy-two children died under a year old, and 26 at one year and under five years. The former being in the ratio of 3·4 and the latter of 1·2 per thousand.

The sub-registration districts will now be reviewed separately:—

LOUTH SUB-DISTRICT.

Population—3918.

Comprising the following parishes, viz:—Brackenborough, Burwell, North & South Elkington, Farforth-with-Maidenwell, Fotherby, Hallington, Haugham, Keddington, Legbourne, Louth Park, Little Cawthorpe, Little Grimsby, Muckton, Oxcombe, Raithby and Maltby, Ruckland, Stewton, Tathwell, Utterby, Welton-le-Wold, Withcall, and Woulaby.

The deaths were 19 Males, and 20 Females, total 39, ratio per thousand 9·9. The births were 53 Males, and 44 Females, total 97, rate per thousand 24·7.

There was a death from Cancer at Welton, and a child two years old died at Tathwell, of Whooping Cough with complications.

WITHERN SUB-DISTRICT.

Population—3398.

Comprising the following parishes, viz:—Withern, Trus-thorpe, Gayton-le-Marsh, Strubby with Woodthorpe, Maltby-le-Marsh, Saleby with Woodthorpe, Hagnaby with Hannah, Haugh, Tothill, Claythorpe, Authorpe, Belleau with Aby and Greenfield, South Thoresby, Swaby, Walmsgate, and North and South Reston.

The deaths were Males 19, Females 21, total 40, rate per thousand 11·7.

Births, Males 46, Females 27, total 73, rate per thousand 21·4.

A young woman at Maltby died of Puerperal Fever, and there were two deaths at South Reston, of Typhoid: one was suffering from another serious disease when attacked. Three children of 18 months, and under, died of Whooping Cough, and there were deaths from Cancer at Aby, Trusthorpe, and Maltby.

TETNEY SUB-DISTRICT.

Population—4592.

Comprising the following parishes, viz:—Holton-le-Clay, Waithe, North Thoresby, North Cotes, Marshchapel, Grainthorpe with Ludney and Wragholme, Yarborough, the two Covenhams, Fulstow, Ludborough, Grainsby, and Tetney.

Deaths, Males 41, Females 33, total 74, rate per thousand 16·1.

Births, Males 57, Females 40, total 97, rate per thousand 21·1.

An infant died at Marshchapel of Whooping Cough, a man of Cancer at Fulstow, and there were two deaths from Diphtheria, one at North Cotes, and the other at North Thoresby.

SALTFLEET SUB-DISTRICT.

Population—4822.

Comprising the following parishes, viz:—Saltfleet with Skidbrook, the three Saltfleetbys, North and South Cockerington, Alvingham, the two Theddlethorpes, Grimoldby, Manby, the three Carltons, North and South Somercotes, and Conisholme.

Deaths, Males 51, Females 28, total 79, rate per thousand 14·5.

Births, Males 56, Females 63, total 119, rate per thousand 24·6.

There were two deaths from Diphtheria at North Cockerington. Cancer caused seven deaths, three at North Somercotes, and one each at South Somercotes, Alvingham, Theddlethorpe All Saints, and Saltfleetby All Saints.

BINBROOK SUB-DISTRICT.

Population—3909.

Comprising the following parishes, viz:—Binbrook, Kelstern, Ludford Magna, and Parva, Calcethorpe, Gayton-le-Wold, Burgh with Girsby, Hainton, South Willingham, Biscathorpe, Donington, Stenigot, North Ormsby, Wyham-with-Cadeby, and East Wykeham.

Deaths, Males 31, Females 31, total 62, rate per thousand 15·8.

Births, Males 46, Females 50, total 96, rate per thousand 24·5.

A child of 16 months died at Binbrook, of Measles, followed by Pneumonia. There were deaths at Ludford Parva, Binbrook, and Donington, from Cancer.

In conclusion, I wish to enlist your support, in an attempt to prevent the spread of Consumption, and other forms of Tuberculosis, in our district. Medical research has proved, that these diseases are caused by a microbe, called the Tubercle bacillus, which is an exceedingly minute rod, generally curved, only to be seen by staining, under a high power of the microscope. This forms spores, which are the seeds of the disease, and if dry, they will often remain dormant for long periods of time.

Consumption, or Phthisis, used to be thought hereditary, but this has been disproved: true, some families are especially subject to it, but this is because a fault exists, in their constitution, rendering them specially liable to the attacks of the Tubercle bacillus. A person cannot have the disease unless attacked by the bacillus. This is true also of cases of *Tabes mesenterica*, (or consumption of the bowels), *Tubercular meningitis*, (or consumption of the brain), *Lupus*, (or tubercular disease of the skin), and tubercular disease of the bones, joints, and some forms of spinal disease, ending in hump back. If the Tubercle bacillus, and its spores, can be prevented from entering the system, the person will not have the disease. How can this be done? The infection is in the expectoration, in tuberculous meat, and, (especially as regards consumption of the bowels), in milk from tuberculous cows. There is no danger from the breath, the bacillus has

never been found in it. The expectoration dries, and mixes with the dust of the room, a person in bad health breathes it, the bacillus finds a lodgment in his lungs, or elsewhere, and tubercular disease results. An infant receives milk from a cow, whose udder is tuberculous, the bacilli lodge in the intestinal glands, and you have consumption of the bowels. If the consumptive will only expectorate into a disinfecting fluid, and all the cups, and other articles he uses be kept separate, and disinfected,—if when he dies his house is disinfected, with all the articles he has used, the disease will not spread. If milk be boiled before use, the bacilli are killed. Tuberculous meat should not be eaten.

Firstly, I would respectfully ask all of you to spread the the knowledge of these facts. Secondly, I would have leaflets printed, and distributed throughout the district, pointing out the danger, and how it can be avoided, and thirdly, the registrars should be instructed to notify all deaths from tubercular diseases, and the houses be disinfected, as after other infectious cases. Consumption, or Phthisis, kills about 40,000 persons annually, in England and Wales, and about 20,000 more die from other tubercular diseases. The mortality from Consumption the last 50 years, has been reduced more than one half, by improved sanitation, such as better drainage of the subsoil, better sewage, better food, better ventilation, and better houses, and I respectfully submit, that if you persevere, as you have done in the past, in these matters, and see fit to carry out my proposals, we may reasonably anticipate the time, when Tuberculosis, which has carried off some of our most promising sons and daughters, will be but a painful memory of the past.

I wish to thank the Chairman, and the Members of the Committee, for their kindness, and courtesy to me, during the past year.

CHARLES J. MYERS, M.R.C.S. & L.S.A.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.